Reminiscences of the early days of Minnesota, 1851 to 1861 /

REMINISCENCES OF THE EARLY DAYS OF MINNESOTA, 1851 TO 1861.*

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In the early days of which I speak there was no zealous rivalry, nor even friendly competition, between the Twin Cities. Minneapolis was not yet on the map, and St. Anthony was only a wayside village; while St. Paul had already assumed the form of a thriving and bustling city, of prosperous proportions, with two thousand people or more, the capital of the Territory. Of course there was a town of St. Peter, on the St. Peter river, the would-be rival and competitor for capital honors, but it was of less size, less prospects, and far away from the temporary and permanent head of navigation. For no little time both St. Peter and Minneapolis later strove, with much federal aid and no little misappropriation of money, to become the head of navigation, but all efforts and subsidies proved vain. Nature discountenanced, disfavored, and rendered futile all such artificial efforts.

Above the Falls of St. Anthony stretched an unbroken wilderness of prairie and pine forest, trodden only by the foot of the wandering red man. At the confluence of the Mississippi and St. Peter rivers stood Fort Snelling, with its stone walls and frowning batteries, the military guardian of the unbounded West. Opposite to the fort and beneath it, crouched the modest hamlet of Mendota, wherein dwelt that prince of men, Henry Hastings Sibley, whose humble but baronial home yet stands as a memorial of him, the first governor of the state of Minnesota, and at no time less than among the first and foremost of its pioneer citizenry.

The textbook of geography in 1845 speaks of all this region as a country “unknown and occupied by Chippewas, Menominees, and other Indians; wild rice in the marshes, furnishing food; the soil fine, and certain districts rich in mines of iron, 480 lead, and copper.” Be it observed that so late, then, as only six years before my personal observations begin, this section was reckoned as unknown, an unexplored region.

In 1848 Hon. Stephen A. Douglas introduced a bill into the United States senate, which became a law March 3, 1849, creating Minnesota Territory, to which a governor was shortly appointed. In 1851 all that land about Fort Snelling westward of St. Peter river and the Mississippi was a military reservation under the immediate control of the commandant of the fort. Minnehaha sang its joyous notes to the wild Dakotas and the birds of the air. Two white men with their families, alone, lived on the entire reservation, leagues in extent, Philander Prescott and John H. Stevens. Prescott came hither in 1820 as a clerk to a man named Devotion, who first brought merchandise here for the Indian trade. About two years later the Columbia Fur Company brought the second installment of goods and opened extensive trading with the Indians. In 1826 Joseph R. Brown made a claim near “Little falls,” or “Brown's falls,” as Minnehaha was then called, but he abandoned it in 1830. An impression had prevailed that farm products would not mature in this high latitude, and all military provisions were shipped from the south until 1823, when the soldiers under Lieutenant Camp experimented in potatocs, corn, cabbages, and onions, and discovered that they would grow and mature.

Early pioneers from the Hudson Bay Company and the Selkirk colony had settled on this reservation in 1827, and onward, but were driven off by the United States soldiers in the year 1840, and their houses were torn down or burned. Abraham Perry, having large herds of cattle, was forced from his claim. He pitched his tent on the east side of the river, beyond the limits of the reservation. Philander Prescott, government farmer for the Indians, broke the first sod outside of the vicinity of the fort, on a piece of ground near lake Calhoun, in 1830, under the direction of Major Lawrence Taliaferro, government agent of

the Sioux. On that very spot in August, 1852, my sister and I, with the family of Dr. A. E. Ames, picked bushels of wild strawberries. The abandoned cornfield was literally one vast bed of the prolific and luscious native fruit.

Prescott's house and his small farm adjoining it were but a few rods from Minnehaha creek and its waterfall. He was 481 married to an Indian woman of the Dakotas, and they had a large family of girls and boys, whom I knew. Owing to his marriage and kindly spirit, he was most influential among the Indians, and was not less popular among the incoming white settlers. He was the first white man to fall a victim to the savage butchery of the massacre in August, 1862. His death was a sacrifice for his fellowmen. Aware of the conspiracy among the hostile Sioux to rise and destroy the palefaces, he sternly opposed it in secret council and also openly. He was ambushed and murdered, lest his better and wiser counsels should prevail.

It may be well to recall that the portion of our state west of the St. Croix river and east of the Mississippi, in which the greater part of the city of St. Paul is located, was originally in the Northwest Territory ceded by Virginia to the United States. Out of that generous cession were created Ohio, Michigan, Indiana, Illinois, and Wisconsin, and so much of Minnesota as lies between the St. Croix and the Mississippi; but the larger part of this state west of the Mississippi, including Fort Snelling, comes of the Louisiana Purchase from Napoleon Bonaparte for fifteen million dollars in 1803. Thus the area of Minnesota's tenure passed through not less than six or eight jurisdictions before it became either a territorial or state unit. Referring to this peculiar fact, General Sibley was wont to remark jocosely, “I was successively a citizen of Michigan, Wisconsin, Iowa, and Minnesota, both state and territory, without changing my residence at Mendota.”

The second of the two men living on the military reservation in 1851 was Colonel John H. Stevens, a veteran of the Mexican war, the first settler in Minneapolis proper, in 1849, ever a prominent and influential citizen. I well recall his cottage, a story and a half in height,

perched on the very edge of the river bank, and hard-by the landing place of the ferryboat, of which Captain John Tapper was for a long time the able-bodied and trusty ferryman.

The ferryboat itself was of the primitive character familiar enough to all pioneers, whose running stock consisted of a rope cable stretched from shore to shore, the river's current supplying the force to drive it to and for according as the movable keel or side board was raised or lowered.

General James H. Baker has well stated, in his sketch of 31 482 Governor Alexander Ramsey, how much is due to the statecraft of Sibley, the skill of Ramsey, and the combined wisdom and diplomacy of both, with the government and in treaties made in 1851 with the Sioux Indians, in securing so vast a fertile region on the west side of the Mississippi, claimed, occupied, and sold by the aboriginal tribes.

In 1851, between St. Paul and the village of St. Anthony three stretched an old Indian trail, used as a highway, midway of which stood a solitary road house or tavern, known as Desnoyer's, whose deep dug well and iron-bound bucket furnished water to the laboring horses,and whose bar quenched the not less thirsty pioneer. Of its kind it was a sort of Samaritan inn, such as yet stands on the downward slope from Jerusalem to Jericho, a resort for the wayfaring and weary man, but so decently kept that no scandal or scene of riotousness was ever associated with it.

It was in August, 1851, when the Coolbaughs, with other passengers, disembarked in St. Paul from that famous old Mississippi steamer, War Eagle, and stepped for the first time on the soil of Minnesota Territory. We had come immediately from farm life in Winnebago county and from Freeport, Illinois. My father's health failing, he was advised to seek a higher latitude and healthier climate, and, hearing of Minnesota, he sought a new home here. We came as a family from Pennsylvania, from the banks of the Susquehanna in Bradford county.

My father, Daniel M., was of German descent, yet represented by the Von Kaulbachs of the fatherland. The first Coolbaugh in America is said to have come twenty-three years after the Jamestown colony in 1607, a sea captain from Holland. My mother was of English blood, born in Stockbridge, of the Massachusetts Whitneys, whose names are enrolled among the minute men of 1775, similarly as members of my father's family furnished recruits to the worn and battered ranks of Washington's army at Valley Forge.

Our journey from the Susquehanna to Rock river, Illinois, was through that long stretch of country known as “the Overland Road West,” in a prairie schooner drawn by four horses, camping by the wayside when taverns were not at hand. When we subsequently landed in Minnesota, we were five in number, 483 my father and mother, my sister, a baby brother, and myself.

The day we disembarked was fair and beautiful. The scene that first met our eyes was not unattractive. Tall rugged cliffs of white sandstone, capped with gray limestone, rose to view as we looked westward on both sides of the river. A few scattered shacks and larger warehouses confronted us, while farther up the hill shoreward we beheld scattering stores and some few residences. To the right and eastward, near and far away, stretched a great wide-spreading green morass, looking so deep and forbidding that seemingly no foot of man could traverse it; but all that waste has long since been recovered and now is occupied by the Union Station, its extensive yards, and the very many wholesale and other establishments in the immediate vicinage.

A pleasant feature of our voyage up the Mississippi was the passing of certain points that have since taken on increase of size, city from, and urban beauty and interest, such as Winona, Red Wing, Hastings, each of these being then marked as habitations only by slab shacks and Indian tepees. Alongside of these places, the War Eagle discharged her cargo of live stock. The work was accomplished by the cattle being forcibly pushed over the gunwales, and each beast, as it fell, was submerged for the instant, then rose, and,

expelling the water from its nostrils, made for the shore, a process so rude and novel that it brought every passenger to view the scene.

Among the most notable incidents, however, was the appearance on board of the governor of the new territory. Young as I was, I had already noted the presence of this stranger among us, a tall, stately man, dark visaged, heavy-browed, of giant form, whom my father introduced afterward to my mother as Alexander Ramsey. A feeling of satisfaction and added security seemed to pervade the body of passengers when aware of the companionship of the chief magistrate of our destined home. I still clearly recall my first sight of this great man, for as such we Minnesotans can truly think and speak of him. In the fullness of health and maturity of vigorous strength, Ramsey stood a prince among men. I have heard it said that when Daniel Webster was in London and walked the Strand, or threaded the not less crowded Hyde Park, passersby would stop and question each other, “What 484 king is that?” Such was the dignity of Webster's carriage, the massiveness of form, the majesty of brow, the eagle eye of the great Expounder of the Constitution. Similarly Governor Ramsey throughout all his life exercised a powerful personal influence. He needed no crown to mark the dignity of his bearing, the royal majesty of his nature, or the wisdom of his reign and rule.

With Ramsey at the helm, whether in St. Paul or in Washington, with his inspiring genius and commanding figure, there never was any question as to how Minnesota stood or should stand during the trials and despondencies in the Civil War. It has ever seemed to me that with the glory of the old First Minnesota Regiment and its heroic deeds of valor, at Gettysburg and on other fields, should be interwoven the life-story of Alexander Ramsey, who was the first governor among all the states to proffer a regiment to Lincoln at this first call for troops in the beginning of the war.

Finding a temporary shelter for the family, my father proceeded at once to St. Anthony on a prospecting tour. In his absence we who were left behind, a Sunday occurring, attended the only religious services known to us at that time, that of the Rev. Edward D.

Neill, whose subsequent career proved him to be one of our state's most accomplished gentlemen, scholars, and authors. Later, during the early years of my ministry in the Parish of the Holy Trinity, St. Anthony, we became friends and neighbors, when he assumed the presidency of the newly created Macalester College, located then in the heart of St. Anthony, being opened and maintained some years in the large stone structure known as the Winslow House. This hotel was an adventurous proposition, having been built for the accommodation of wealthy southern patrons, who early flocked hither in summer time with their negro slaves. Upon the breaking out of the war, they deserted in a body, which ruined the patronage and prospects of the Winslow House, so that this large building stood unused till the founding of Macalester College.

With my father's return from his prospecting tour, we learned that he had determined to make St. Anthony his home. Thither immediately he, with my mother and the other children, drove in one of the old fashioned Concord coaches, drawn by four horses, of the stage line owned by Borup and 485 Oakes. I was left to follow with the household goods. Seated beside the driver on the top of the high piled furniture wagon, it seemed a long and toilsome way to the Falls. Having passed Desnoyer's halfway house, suddenly the driver left his seat, and, seeking the road, brought back in his hand a horrid-looking instrument, which he described as an Indian scalping knife. From that hour on till we reached the village, I was in mortal terror lest a painted savage might spring from behind a tree and scalp us.

Being settled in our new home, we children began to attend the school, in its building on University avenue, about two blocks from the Winslow House. Of this school E. P. Mills, E. W. Merrill, and D. S. B. Johnston, were teachers at different times. It was the foundation and beginning of the State University. A Congregational meetinghouse was already built, and a minister of that denomination settled, the Rev. Charles Secombe. An Episcopal church was also in process of erection, of which twenty-one years afterward I became the rector.

The year 1851 was of the period when the flood tide of immigration set in, transforming the territory in a short time and at a rapid rate into the full age and strength of other commonwealths. The people who flocked hither were not of foreign birth and polyglot tongues as now. They were native-born citizens, some being stalwart sons of Maine, from the pine forests of the Penobscot, who loved the echoes of the resounding axe; others came from the rugged hills of Vermont and New Hampshire, and from the low shores of Massachusetts and Connecticut, sturdy and intelligent pioneers; yet others were from the Empire State, and not a few from the steep hills and the beautiful valleys of Pennsylvania, and from the City of Brotherly Love. Of the foreigners who came, France, Ireland, and Scotland furnished the larger part.

A finer class of people, I am led to indulge the thought, never sought the West than those who first came to these shores of the Mississippi. They flocked here not only from the states mentioned, but from “Little Rhody” and New Jersey, also Buckeyes from Ohio and Hoosiers from Indiana, with now and then “the man from Missouri,” and a scattered few from Virginia and Kentucky, of pure English blood, gentle manners, and large vision.

Some of you may remember the address of Gov. John A. Johnson, remarkable for its winsome simplicity and pure eloquence, delivered Commencement Day in 1907 at the University of Pennsylvania. He happily touched upon the close relationship existing between that state and Minnesota by reason of kinship and mutual sympathy, and through Governor Ramsey and other less notable but worthy folk coming from thence. As a fact, two of our territorial governors were from Pennsylvania, and, of the state governors, Miller, the fourth, and McGill, the tenth, were also natives of Pennsylvania. Thus four of our chief magistrates came from the Keystone State.

Without disallowing or lessening what was so felicitously spoken by Governor Johnson, in the beautiful and tender allusion to the feeling of fellowship between the great state of William Penn and Minnesota, the thought may be extended without attenuation of the

chain, that Minnesota is bound not only by more than a fourfold tie to Pennsylvania, but also by a bond of many ply to other states which have contributed largely to the Nation, whose sons came to Minnesota to help lay deep and strong the foundations of a new commonwealth not less great than that of their fathers. Let us not forget that if our state stands not far from the foremost of seven and forty sister states, it is not our rivers and lakes alone, our forests, our broad acres of fertile soil and waving grain, that in fifty years have elevated Minnesota to her place as the great cereal and dairy producing area of the continent, with other features not less contributory to the welfare of humanity, not solely her natural resources, great and manifold as they are; but more is due to the spirit, the inexhaustible energy, and the resourcefulness of her high minded citizenry, who have enlarged and ennobled the annals of accomplishments, not less in the field, in shop and factory, by the arts of peace, than on the battle-fields of our great Civil War, for liberty, justice, equality, and the preservation of the Union.

I am not ashamed to confess that my heart swells with pride when I think of the long list of honored names Minnesota has enshrined in her bosom and inscribed, too, on the deathless roll of fame, not all equally known and published, but each in his place and function helping to approximate to the fulfillment of duty, rendering civic, social, and moral benefit to his state and 487 nation, according to the ability within him, and in the figure employed by Paul when speaking of a temple growing into the stateliness of perfection, “by that which every joint supplieth.”

In 1853 it began to be understood that the officers of Fort Snelling were not so opposed to the occupation of the Military Reservation as formerly. Two men were already there, Philander Prescott and Col. John H. Stevens. Another ventured over, Calvin A. Tuttle, moving into the abandoned barracks which the soldiers had occupied while constructing the government sawmill and grist mill in 1821 and 1823. Under their long, low-browed roof, the first funeral in Minneapolis occurred, upon the death of a child, my sister singing the appropriate hymn.

Other men crept over the river as if by stealth. Among the first was Anson Northup, the early adventurer who built the first hotel in Still water in 1846, the American House in St. Paul, 1848, and the St. Charles in St. Anthony in 1850. He also ran the first steamboat on the Red river of the North. His house stood on the high bank facing and overlooking the Falls, near the site of the great Washburn flour mills. Dr. Alfred E. Ames, whose family came from Belvidere, Ill., also moved over and built a house in 1853. At his suggestion, my father moved over, making a claim of eighty acres and building the third new house. Other pioneers followed thick and fast, and soon the west side was spotted with little habitations.

Recognizing the fact that with such abundant water power an industrial town would likely spring up, the settlers organized an association for self protection, agreeing that no one among them, squatting near or about the Falls, should lay claim to more than eighty acres of land. This was strictly adhered to, and the same association administered such law, justice, and punishments, as it deemed necessary; for as yet there was no court, no judge, no jury. “Jumpers” and other undesirable intruders were unceremoniously notified, and, if necessary, they were forcibly and bodily ejected.

In 1851 a newspaper was published on the east side, called the St. Anthony Express, under Elmer Tyler, edited by Isaac Atwater, who was assisted directly or indirectly by several other young men, as Colonel Spooner and George D. Bowman. All these young men were poor, and it was understood that they 488 were “keeping bachelor's hall” in the printing office. It was reported that they lived principally upon mush, milk, and molasses. Whether true or false, it matters little, but one thing I do know, that the young editor was inured to hard fare and plain living; for I heard him say some years later, in a public address delivered at the laying of the corner stone of the great Episcopal schools in Faribault, that when working his way through Yale College it was his habit to eat for his noonday meal the cold boiled potatoes left over from his breakfast. I visited the printing office one day, and upon the huge stove, centrally located for the diffusion of heat, I saw a big iron pot and within it a seething, bubbling mass of yellow meal. Few lawyers had a

more extended or lucrative law practice than Judge Isaac Atwater, who became a resident of the west side, accumulated a large fortune, and died not long since at an advanced age, laden with honors, leaving generous bequests to church and eleemosynary uses. Mr. George D. Bowman, who had studied at Bowdoin College, was for a time an inmate of our home, a young man of rare taste and fine education. To him, following the suggestion of Charles Hoag, is to be accredited the public adoption of the future name of the growing town, Minneapolis, “the Minnehaha City.” He advocated this name in the Express, and talked not a little about it.

Charles Hoag and Miss Marion Coolbaugh taught school in the First Presbyterian church, which, in allusion to its very slender spire, was called “the Toothpick.” Rev. Dr. Knicker-backer, the Episcopal pastor, later bought the “Toothpick” church, and established in it the first parochial school. This school was taught by Mrs. W. E. Jones and Miss Leonora Hall, who later was the wife of George H. Christian.

Minneapolis soon began to have its own newspapers. In 1853, the Northwestern Democrat appeared, beginning in St. Anthony under George W. Prescott, but the next year it was sold to W. A. Hotchkiss, who moved it to the west side of the river. Electa Hartwell and my sister Marion folded the first Minneapolis issue, from the old Franklin hand press. In 1857 it was again sold, to Mr. W. F. Russell, who changed its name to The Gazette. After other changes of both name and ownership, the paper came into the posesssion of Hon. William S. King, who rechristened it as The State Atlas.

The Chronicle was started in 1866 by my friend and schoolmate, Willard S. Whitmore, nephew of Congressman Cyrus Aldrich, associating with him Col. John H. Stevens, Fred L. Smith, and Col. Le Vinne P. Plummer. The following year it was joined to the Atlas and appeared under the name of The Tribune.

The original sites of St. Paul, St. Anthony, and Minneapolis, were far more attractive in their natural setting and landscape beauty than would now appear, even under their present urban improvement and embellishments. Wooded hills surrounded one and all. Not the least attractive was St. Paul, whose entire early settlement nestled closely within the valley of the circumjacent and overlooking hills. The rough and rugged cliffs, of snowy whiteness as seen from the river's edge, were surmounted with a heavy growth of oak and pine. The natural and simple grandeur of the Falls of St. Anthony, unbroken and undimmed by the later constructions of apron and dam and mills, cannot now well be conceived of, even in the glow of a fervent imagination. They were grand and beautiful, as every old settler can testify.

The lofty bluffs in the rear of Minneapolis, crowned with a rich growth of stately oaks, stood as a splendid background to a picturesque landscape. Along the summit of these ancient cliffs ran a well-worn footpath, an old trail, giving touching evidence that the red man appreciated these heights and sought the solitary haunts to enjoy the beauty of his native land. One autumn night from the top of these natural watch towers, I beheld the oft dreaded prairie fires, raging in many distinct and far separated places, illuminating with spectacular and fearful splendor the darkness of the sky.

Another feature, not the least interesting to the lover of humanity, has been withdrawn. Three tribes of the North American Indians centered around the Falls of St. Anthony, the Winnebagoes, the Sioux, the Chippewa. Their trails centered at and radiated from the Falls, like the spokes of a wheel to the iron-bound felly, leading to and from their respective homes and hunting grounds. Here, on the broad and smooth rock ledge above the Falls, they forded the river on foot and astride their ponies. Not infrequently bands of these several tribes peaceably invaded our settlement, danced in our streets, 490 and sought our favor and our gifts of bread and pork and beans. Of course they were armed, each equipped with tomahawk, scalping knife, bow and feathered arrow, or flintlock gun.

Scalps hung at their waists, and eagle feathers adorned their head gear and war locks, bearing conspicuous but silent evidence of battles fought and enemies slain.

To their credit, be it said, however, that during all their close neighboring and frequent visits (not wholly unwelcome to break the monotony of frontier life), I never knew nor saw an immodest act of Indian maid or woman, nor did I hear of theft, crime, or misdemeanor. Law or no law, little “fire water” was sold or given to these children of the forest, and though I saw hundreds at a time, and not at infrequent intervals smaller groups and scalping parties, and at one time several thousand, yet I saw little intoxication. I say it boldly and gladly, in the defense of the much abused and maligned red man, that the Indian of early times, uncontaminated by the bold, bad white man, was not of and by himself the vicious, hostile, repulsive, defiant creature so oft depicted. If from his original estate he has fallen into the low, sneaking thief, tramp, robber and cut-throat, dissolute and debauched, it is the white man who has done it, who has injured and betrayed his simple habit and confiding nature.

You may call me wise or call me foolish, but I am now, and for life long have been, the constant friend of the red man; and I say unhesitatingly that I believe Fenimore Cooper has not more greatly or erroneously exaggerated his native virtues than his adversary has grossly distorted his vices and traduced his virtues. I have some sense of the smiling incredulity with which I may be heard, but I have not the less assurance of the fairness and justice of my judgment, formed from personal acquaintance and from the observation of wiser and better men.

The venerable Bishop Whipple, known among the red men as “old Straight Tongue,” because he always told the truth, used to quote Generals Miles, Meade, Sheridan, Halleck, and other officers, to attest that not one treaty out of the many had been fully and fairly carried out by our Government. The Bishop was further wont to say, that in all cases where the Indian had been charged with wrong and misdoing, later investigation and subsequent facts proved that these acts were 491 invariably in retaliation for the white

man's prior misdemeanors, not less cruel, not less injurious, murder and outrage being not excepted.

In 1872, as United States commissioner, with others, I visited the various tribes of Chippewas from Leech lake and Lake Winnebagoshish to Red lake, tributary to the Red river of the North; and during the length of those days I found them as I knew them in the earlier days of my boyhood, unperverted, friendly, a faithful and confiding group of men and women, ready and willing to be led, and brutish only when misled by swinish lusts and distraught and maddened by the fiery flames of the paleface's whiskey. I met Hole-in-the-Day, knew Little Crow, Good Thunder, and other less notable chiefs and head men of the Northwest, and not a few of the common rank and file. I can even say that I knew “Old Bets,” of long and doubtful recollections, here in the city of St. Paul; but there were better days even for her, the earlier, when fairer things can be well said, before she became a common vagrant.

Will you bear with me while I relate a single incident? In Lafayette, Indiana, I met a lady parishioner, who chanced to show me a daguerreotype which she cherished with the fondest attachment. To my great surprise, it was that of “Old Bets.” The lady was the daughter of an army officer who had been sent with his company to occupy Fort Snelling. She was born while the company was in winter quarters on the little island in the Mississippi just below the Fort. The company was there encamped because of the insufficient barracks of the uncompleted fort. Strange to say, upon this lady's birth, “Old Bets” or “Young Bets,” as it was then, was summoned and acted as nurse to mother and child. So kind and so gentle, so efficient were the services of the Indian girl, that the lieutenant and his family ever cherished the kindest thoughts and warmest affection for her.

The first building used in Minneapolis as a schoolhouse is said to have been an abandoned lumbermen's camp, a veritable shanty 20 by 30 feet in size, on Anson Northup's land, near his house, and hard by the present St. Paul and Milwaukee station.

Between it and the site of the station was a small, deep pond, in which the boys used to swim during the noon recess and after school. In front was a wide-spreading swamp, where 492 cowslips grew in abundance, and the white and yellow moccasin flowers. The teacher of this school was May Miller, sister of Col. John H. Stevens' wife, later Mrs. Robinson. She was succeeded by a seafaring man, Green by name, who, learning the utility of flogging in the English navy, extended its service lustily and at short intervals upon us boys.

I recall several other private schools in different places, one especially on Bridge street, taught by Miss Electa Hartwell, since we boys used to infest the baker's shop just over the way and invest our change in gingerbread, in pieces of so large dimensions that we were wont to speak of them as “quarter sections,” not an unfamiliar term of either to the sons of pioneers. Mr. A. K. Hartwell, a brother of Electa, also kept a school in Fletcher's Hall on Helen street.

In November, 1858, the historic Union School, a two and a half story brick building, built by the city, was opened under George B. Stone, with a staff of teachers, two of whom were Mrs. Lucy Rogers and Mrs. S. B. Grimshaw. At a later time, when the city of Minneapolis wanted the block of land on which this first schoolhouse stood, to erect the present City Hall, the block was found a portion of my father's original plat of eighty acres, secured, patented and owned by him, then and now, recorded in the county records under the name of D. M. Coolbaugh. Under the ruling of Judge Lochren, this valuable piece of property was adjudged forfeited by our family on the score of its having been in possession of other hands for twenty years without protest, no witnesses nor documents appearing, either of his giving or in any wise disposing of the same. Here in this school I acquired a sufficiency of Greek and Latin and other knowledge to gain an entrance to an Eastern college.

Mr. George B. Stone was called from Fall River, Mass. He was a graduate of Brown University, a ripe scholar and skillful teacher, a wise disciplinarian and thorough organizer,

under whose guidance the several city schools took form and order. All of the old surviving pupils, as I myself, look back with precious and grateful memories to the sweet and tender, but strict and strong, personal influences he brought to bear upon us. Under his loving and masterful sway we had to work, learned to work, and, further, learned to love the work. His was the most thorough and rigid discipline I ever knew, of 493 which there was no let-up until we acquired the habit of absolute self control. He put every pupil upon his honor, both as to behavior and study, and then attended to our keeping it untarnished. In the due course of time, the order was most perfect and self regulating, and the zeal and interest in study unequalled. Mr. Stone resigned to accept the broader field and more lucrative position of a professorship in Washington University, then as now a favorite institution of St. Louis. During the Civil War he visited the barracks of the young soldiers, particularly those of the Minnesota troops temporarily quartered there, relieving the tedium of idle camp life by supplying school books to the soldiers and instructing them in the prosecution of studies broken off by enlistment and service.

One schoolmate, George Case, grandson of Emmanuel Case, years after the war, told me that under the kindly and generous tuition thus furnished he completed his algebra and geometry. Under Prof. Stone's supervision other soldiers advanced themselves in interrupted courses of reading and study. To many besides myself, he remains the ideal, most beloved teacher. Thoroughness was the marked characteristic of his life and his work.

Under his guidance an organization was formed of the High School and intermediate classes, known as “The Chrysalis,” in which the study of parliamentary law was cultivated, with presentation of original essays, recitations, and an occasional play before the footlights. Thus were engendered the love of books and some elementary familiarity with the best British and American authors. At Mr. Stone's suggestion we had a course of public lectures by professional men of local reputation, and now and then of wider prominence. One most pleasing and acceptable lecture was by William L. Banning of St. Paul. We secured Bayard Taylor, then perhaps the most popular lecturer in the country,

his subject being, “The Land of the Midnight Sun;” his price was high, several hundred dollars, but we cleared seventy-five dollars.

This sum we devoted to the establishment of a public library, of which at that time there was none. To the best of my knowledge and belief this was the first money donated for that laudable purpose, and not long afterward it eventuated, with increase of other gifts and the growth of popular interest, 494 to the founding of the Athenaeum, which still later and more fully developed into the present Minneapolis Public Library. Years after our humble incipient effort a splendid endowment came, to make sure and permanent our feeble enterprise, through the generous bequest of lands and rentals from Dr. Kirby Spencer, a dentist, then a resident of the city.

Between the years of '51 and '61 many men of note, and some of more than national reputation, visited the Twin Cities. The wife of Cyrus Aldrich, first Congressman from Minneapolis, once told me the very great number of well known and distinguished personages she had entertained in her hospitable home. The number was so great, the names so numerous, I would fail in any attempt at recall. Two came whose name and fame were equally great at home and abroad, Edward Everett and William H. Seward.

The visit of Seward in the newly created state of Minnesota was not an ordinary event. It was more than of local importance. It encouraged the feeling that we were a real and increasingly large factor of the mighty forces upbuilding the Greater Union yet to be. His coming was of national significance. His words and his prominence in the world's politics combined to create and make substantial (to democratize) that growing sentiment, that Minnesota was to bear an essential and conspicuous part in the nation's glory, which subsequently Alexander Ramsey, the War Governor, could rely upon when in Washington he offered to Lincoln the first body of volunteer troops to face the rising, yea, the already risen Rebellion.

Seward was full of statecraft, an accomplished scholar and cultivated gentleman, a diplomat of the highest order, a royal patriot, a wise far-seeing citizen, an American whose vision of his country's greatness was like that of Marcus Tullius Cicero, of unlimited scope, whose eagle eye scanned the horizon on land and sea to extend his country's mission. No man now doubts the wisdom of the Alaska Purchase, though at the crisis of its issue he stood quite solitary and alone in the advocacy of the scheme whose ratification has strengthened the long arm of the republic, with Pacific coast lines from San Diego on the south to Bering's strait on the north, and has further enriched her with inexhaustible mines of gold, silver, copper, and coal.

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Seward was heralded to speak in St. Paul on September 18, 1860. Well nigh all Minneapolis invaded St. Paul to hail the chief of statesmen and give him welcome. The streets of the city were alive with citizens from near and far; wide-awakes and military companies marched in procession with the citizens, at beat of drum and martial airs. Upon the steps of the first Minnesota capitol, the venerable statesman faced an immense throng of the new state's representative sons, and expectancy beamed from every eye. From that rostrum of the public forum, he delivered an address of singular and prophetic foresight.

This address, entitled “Political Equality the National Idea,” is published in The Works of William H. Seward, edited by George E. Baker, 1861, forming pages 330–347 of Volume IV. First he alluded to his voyage by steamboat from Prairie du Chien to St. Paul, with praise of the grandeur and beauty of the river valley, its inclosing bluffs, “sentinel walls that look down on the Mississippi,” and the splendor of Lake Pepin seen at the close of an autumn day. Continuing in the introductory remarks which led up to his main theme in the presidential campaign then in progress, Seward said:

I find myself now, for the first time, on the highlands in the center of the continent of North America, equidistant from the waters of Hudson's bay and the gulf of Mexico, from the Atlantic ocean to the ocean in which the sun sets.…In other days, studying what might

perhaps have seemed to others a visionary subject, I have cast about for the future, the ultimate central seat of power of the North American people. I have looked at Quebec and at New Orleans, at Washington and at San Francisco, at Cincinnati and at St. Louis, and it has been the result of my best conjecture that the seat of power for North America would yet be found in the valley of Mexico; that the glories of the Aztec capital would be renewed, and that city would become ultimately the capital of the United States of America. But I have corrected that view, and I now believe that the last seat of power on the great continent will be found somewhere within a radius not very far from the very spot where I stand, at the head of navigation on the Mississippi river and on the great Mediterranean lakes.

If Seward's words and vision of the future helped to create and substantiate the idea of Minnesota's fellowship in the unexampled development of the great middle west, Edward 496 Everett, a year later, awakened the latent ardor and kindled the slumbering embers of loyalty to duty into flames that led our patriots and their sons in the First Minnesota and other regiments on the fields of carnage to make more bright and enduring the glory of Freedom's heights, and to leave the Star of the North shining with increase of splendor. Who shall say that the voice of Everett, appealing to loyalty and to duty, was less efficient, in preaching the crusade of war, than the Chicago minstrel, Jules Lombard, of whom Lincoln said that his pariotic verse and voice of wondrous melody enlisted more soldiers for the Union army than any hundred and fifty recruiting officers with beating drums and sounding fifes?

Everett delivered in St. Paul in 1861 his famous oration on the Life of George Washington. I was fortunate in being able to crowd in and secure a seat in the front row. His was the first form, figure, face, and bearing, that filled my youthful dream of an ideal patriot, scholar, statesman. Nothing seemed wanting in the man before me that could more fully round out a great orator. His splendid stature, his dignified demeanor, his noble countenance and lofty brow, his matchless voice, his scholarly choice of phrase

and diction, his noble subject, “First in war, first in peace, first in the hearts of his countrymen,”—these, one and all, enthralled me.

When in the peroration, in view of the “irrepressible conflict” of the Civil War and the dire necessity to rise and save the Union, he called on old men and children, young men and maidens, to fly to the rescue in the name and power of Washington, lifting high his hands above his lordly head, he cried.

“Come one, come all! Come as the winds come, when forests are rended, Come as the waves come, when navies are stranded.”

My feelings were one with the wrought-up multitude beside me, that we thought we heard, as it were, the voice of God and the great prophet of Sabaoth, calling us to arms and to duty. With the lapse of more than half a century, I cannot even yet think long nor speak well of that awe-inspiring hour, when American eloquence reached its climax, without a return of the thrill that then convulsed and the power of speech that overwhelmed.